

DICK SMITH
VZ 300
SOFTWARE

DATA BASE

INSTRUCTION MANUAL

DICK SMITH
DATABASE
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INSTRUCTION MANUAL

THE PROGRAMME

The V Z Database has been designed and written to cover as many user applications as possible and is ideal for producing Single or Multifield records which are totally user designated.

The Database will be found useful in producing simple lists for home application to larger more complicated lists and records for Small Business use. The upper limit of the database is solely dependant on the record length set by the user with a minimum of 95 records at the maximum record length of 194 Characters to a maximum of 500.

There is also an upper limit of 25 Fields to each Record.

If you are unfamiliar with general Data Structures then it may be useful to explain them at this point as to how the files and data in them is set up.

In general terms a FILE is a group of related pieces of information similar to the pieces of information in a filing cabinet.

A RECORD is like a Manilla folder in that cabinet in that it contains sheets of paper which are also related to the heading on the folder.

THE FIELDS are the pieces of paper in the folder and contain information relating to that folder and the Field is named as the heading on that sheet of paper.

In short a FILE is a Collection of RECORDS which in turn are made up of numerous FIELDS.

A RECORD may also contain only one field and this is termed a simple list.

As stated previously each Record may contain as few as one or as many as twenty-five fields as long as the total number of characters in that record does not exceed 194 including spaces.

The first step in using the Database is to allocate what you think is the most useful size for each field within each record and it is advisable to give it some thought before you commence.

As a rule of thumb the length of each field if of fixed length is the number of characters to be used e.g. if a code number is 5 characters long then the field length is 5. i.e. 12345 is a code of 5 characters. It is advisable that you start code numbers at 1000 as this gives you a range of 8999 separate codes in a field length of 4 characters and it is not mandatory that each code number be consecutive as this allows you to slot in other codes as you need them to keep the codes in numerical order.

With fields of varied length then you must exercise some foresight as to what you feel will cover MOST applications and anything that exceeds those limits will have to be shortened by abbreviation. The program will warn you if the input you have just made is longer than the designated field length and you can then re-input it with abbreviations.

STEP BY STEP THROUGH THE PROGRAMME

The programme is MENU driven and the OPTIONS available are listed below.

- Input Data
- Load existing file
- Search (Find) a record
- Edit (Change) a record
- Print the entire file
- Alpha sort the file
- Save the altered/new file
- Conclude the session

There are screen prompts which will help you to decide which operation to select next.

If two or more prompts appear on the screen then the uppermost is selected first moving down the screen in order.

EACH OPTION IN TURN

INPUT DATA

This is quite simple and the programme will lead you through each field in turn telling you how many characters designated and asking for a Re-input if the field length is exceeded.

When each record is completed it prints the complete record on the screen asking you if it is correct. If it is correct you type Y for yes and you are told how many records are used and how many are free and you continue to the next Input.

If by any chance you notice a mistake in it then you type N for no and then you can re-type the correct input and continue on.

If you have no further inputs then when the start of the next input is displayed then simply type a Q for Quit and you will be returned to the main menu for further processing.

N.B. You cannot use a single letter input in field 1 of the letter Q as this will always return you to Main Menu.

LOAD FILE

This option allows you to load an existing file from disk for review or addition and alteration. Simply ensure that the correct disk is in the disk drive and press the L key.

FIND RECORD

This allows you to search through the file in memory for the entry you designate. There are 5 options available to you in the Sub Menu of the search facility and they will be treated in turn.

1. SEARCH THE FILE BY FIELD 1 CRITERIA.

Code then search by code number. (it is advisable to use a code if that is to be used in your record setup in field 1 as this enables easy search sort and edit functions). Input the code number when prompted and press < Return > this will find any records if it exists in the file and display each in turn on the screen.

SEARCH BY ANY OTHER FIELD

You will first be asked if you wish the entries to be output to the printer as well as the screen. You will then be asked which of the fields you wish to search and finally for the first four letters of that field that you wish to search for. This is so that if the field is 20 characters long you will not have to type in the whole input. It should be noted at this time that the computer will only find the entry if you ask for EXACTLY the same item as is on file.

e.g. (A123) is not the same as (A 123).

If several entries are similar, each will be displayed in

turn and you can cancel this option by pressing the Q key at any time.

3. SEARCH BY RECORD NUMBER

This allows you to find and display a record if you know its record number.

4. DISPLAY WHOLE FILE

This allows you to review the whole file, each entry in turn with a short pause between each display.

EDIT A RECORD

This option is also driven by a sub-menu and has 3 options to chose from.

1. CHANGE A RECORD

This allows you to search through the file for a record by field 1 criteria and you are asked if it is the correct record to change - you are then asked which field you wish to change and finally you type in the change you require.

2. DELETE A RECORD

As with Option 1 you search by field 1. Verify the record to delete and type in the record number displayed and that record is deleted from the file and all other records are shuffled up one place so the record numbers change when using this option.

3. RETURN TO MAIN MENU

This is the same as the last option in the Search Sub Menu.

PRINT FILE

This option outputs the complete file to the printer and includes the FILE NAME and the processing DATE.

ALPHABETISE

This option sorts the file into decending Alphabetical or Numerical order.

SAVE FILE

This option saves to disk the whole file in memory and it is imperative that this is done before finishing the session as all alterations made would be lost and would have to be re-entered at a later date.

It is wise to make frequent "backups" of the file at least once after a processing session as there is nothing as soul destroying as losing several hours or days processing because of a corrupted disk and having to re-enter the lot ... and believe me it can happen. This process is quite easy to achieve by inserting an initialised disk onto the drive and pressing the S key for a second time.

N.B. You cannot use the same disk for the backup as a "file already exists error" will occur.

CONCLUDE SESSION

This option has several internal operations which need to be completed before processing concludes and also gives you the amount of disk space left available.

You will then be asked whether you wish to Continue or Quit and you can re-enter the programme without the loss of the file in memory if necessary.

THE PASSWORD

The Password feature is designed to allow only persons with Authority to operate the system and if you have confidential information in the file you are advised to avail yourself of this option.

If you do not wish to use the password option then

simply press the < Return > key when you are asked for the password when you are initialising the file.

If the correct password is not input after 3 attempts then the computer automatically clears its total memory and then the programme has to be loaded once again.

As you will notice the programme is Copyright protected and this is dualfold, it allows the Author a degree of protection and also allows the user the only access to the use of the programme through the Password.

This programme has been designed for its ease of use and simplicity and is the first in a series of Small Business application programmes which will access the data created within the files by this programme.

ERRORS

There are very few errors which can occur but if for some reason there is an abortive attempt to save the initialisation of the newly created file then a "File already open" error will occur and you will have to close the files manually.

This is achieved by pressing the letter "C" when prompted for the DATE in the introduction screen then < Return > and follow with the date.